

VISability

A Parent's Newsletter

Volume 30, Number 3

July/August/September 2014

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VIPS Approaches A Major Milestone -- 30 Years!!

VIPS is getting ready to enter its 30th year! (We won't talk about how old that makes some of us feel. Our precious first babies are now all grown up.) We would not allow this opportunity to pass us by without a big announcement, so here it is...

One of our most loyal donors is challenging us, and we are challenging you. If you can help us raise \$200,000, they will kick in an additional \$100,000! That gives you 300,000 reasons why you should make your gift to VIPS in honor of its 30th anniversary!

By the way, if you would like to set up a monthly donation option, we can do that too! Just contact Heather Benson, Director of Development, at 502-498-2933.

When VIPS moved from our third home on Garvin Place in 2004, we thought we would never be able to use all the space we have on Goldsmith Lane. Who would have believed how much VIPS would grow over the next 10 years?



October Is Blindness & Visual Impairment Awareness Month

Governor Steve Beshear has once again declared October to be Blindness & Visual Impairment Awareness Month in Kentucky. Thanks to Mary Smyth, Officer Manager for VIPS Central KY, for all of her work on behalf of this issue. Many communities throughout Kentucky will be holding special awareness-building activities throughout the month that VIPS families and friends are sure to find educational and inspirational, including White Cane Day celebrations on Oct. 15.

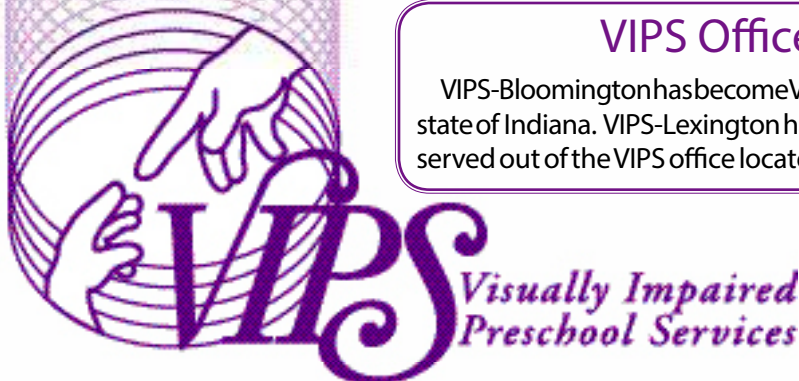
It is, therefore, the time when we ask families to submit their stories and pictures of their children who are blind and visually impaired so that VIPS can brag about your child and celebrate his/her life! We invite all current and former families of VIPS to share whatever they would like the community

VIPS Office Names Get An Update

VIPS-Bloomington has become VIPS-Indiana to reflect our growing presence throughout the state of Indiana. VIPS-Lexington has become VIPS-Central Kentucky to emphasize the region served out of the VIPS office located in Lexington. VIPS-Louisville's name remains the same.

Mission Statement

VIPS empowers families by providing educational excellence to young children with visual impairments in order to build a strong foundation for reaching their highest potential.



to know about their child and family. This is a great opportunity to bring awareness and understanding to the community about children who are blind and visually impaired and their families! Some suggestions are:

1. A sweet or special moment between you and your child;
2. Your child's successes, or challenges;
3. Your personal thoughts about your child and your family;
4. Things people may have said or done that have encouraged or discouraged you;
5. Any assistance or obstacle that you may have encountered within your community;
6. A person or people that have impacted the lives of your child and family;
7. A day-in-the-life of your child and family.

The length of your story is up to you. It can be a few sentences to a few paragraphs. If you have a picture you would like to share please include it when you send us your child's story. We will be sharing your child's story during the month of October on Facebook & Twitter and in our newsletter and email. We will be encouraging people to share and forward all of the stories to their family and friends.

Please email your story and pictures to Mary Smyth at vipslex@vips.org or mail them to her at VIPS, 161 Burt Road Suite 4, Lexington, KY 40503.

Congratulations VIPS 2014 Graduates

by Staci Maynard, VIPS Kids Town Preschool Teacher

On Thursday, June 5, Kids Town Preschool at VIPS-Louisville celebrated its graduating class with a ceremony and reception in the graduates' honor. Kids Town was full of proud family members, friends, community supporters, and VIPS family as eleven of our children were acknowledged for their growth over their preschool careers. Diane Nelson, VIPS Executive Director, welcomed guests. Then the graduates walked down the aisle to their seats as the graduation procession, *Pomp and Circumstance*, played. VIPS Director of Education, Kathy Mullen, introduced staff and the night's guests.

Graduates received braille/print copies of Dr. Seuss' *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* from the Dartmouth Club of Kentucky. The books were presented by Austin Brey, a member of the club and graduate

of Dartmouth College, Dr. Seuss' alma mater. Priscilla Fikes and Keitt Wood also awarded graduates with the gift of a braille flag on behalf of the Fincastle Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The graduating class surprised the DAR members by standing to recite the pledge of allegiance, with some help from the audience, after receiving their gifts. The students enjoyed tactually exploring the braille on the book and the flag as the program progressed.



Above: Kids Town Preschool Graduating girls (l-r) Jaiden, Stella, Tabbitha, Meagan and Adyson; Below: Kids Town Preschool Graduating



Ultimately, the night came down to the special students whom we have been so blessed to teach and spend time with: Sam Benson, Reginald "Brandon" Clancy, Jr., Stella Emmons, Christian Greenwell, Gracie Lewis, Adyson Lovett, Jaiden Schurr, Tabbitha Snider, Taveon Taylor, Megan Weilage, and David Yeast. Each student received a diploma and some kind words from his or her teacher. Then, the audience was treated to a slideshow of photographs of each graduate set to music, courtesy of LaRhonda Locke-Daniels. The program ended with the children showing off their musical



VIPS TVI Mary Lesousky with two of her Jefferson County graduates, Gracie and Brandon.



Left: Graduates recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Below: Members of the Fincastle Chapter of the DAR present children with a tactile drawing of the American Flag.



talents, singing "What a Wonderful World," accompanied by VIPS Music Therapist, Greta Gillmeister.

The night concluded with a cake and punch reception. The tasty cakes were provided by The Bakery at Sullivan University. While eating, families could watch a music video created by Ms. Gillmeister of "What a Wonderful World" containing the graduates' photos. Thank you to all of our staff, families, and supporters who helped make this event, with our largest graduating class ever, a success.

We would like to extend a special "thank you" to the Dartmouth Club of Kentucky, the Fincastle Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and The Bakery at Sullivan University. Your generosity ensured that our graduating students realized how special they are. It was a night to remember great memories we had with one another, but the night became a memorable occasion in itself.

To our graduating class of 2014, we will miss not getting to see you at school every day, but please be sure to come back and visit us so we can see how much you have grown!



David was loaded down with his graduation diploma, book, and flag by the end of the night.

Motivated Mom Paves the Way for Her Beginning Braille Reader

by Paige Maynard, VIPS Kids Town Preschool Teacher

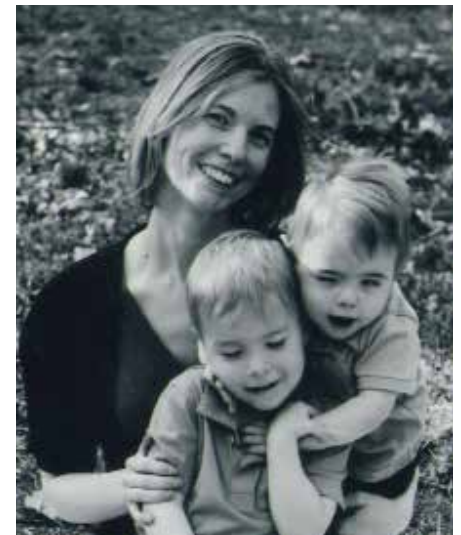
Cindy Lich is the proud mom of 24-month-old Hunter who has retinopathy of prematurity. Hunter learns best when he is able to move and touch, and he is an emergent braille reader.

As Cindy and many parents of children who are blind know, books for braille readers are not as readily available as print ones. Though Cindy had some braille books from Seedlings.org, she had many more print books around her house that Hunter was not able to fully access. Hunter's childcare classroom also had many print board books that he could not fully enjoy.

Cue Cindy's hard work ethic and devotion to her son! She was introduced to the braille code during a home visit from her VIPS teacher. She then decided to take on the task of using braille labels and her braille writer to adapt books at home and school so that Hunter could have the earliest exposure possible to braille, which may become his primary reading medium.

Cindy has spent her spare time studying the braille code, learning to load paper into the braille itself, and transcribing books from print to braille. Now, Hunter has at least eight brailled books in his classroom! Cindy and her family are shining examples of VIPS's mission in action: an empowered family building a strong foundation for Hunter to reach his highest potential!

If you are interested in brailled books for your child, please speak with your Teacher of the Visually Impaired or Developmental Interventionist. She can help you access materials and provide you with training and support.



Cindy with Hunter and his brother Logan.

The Expanded Core Curriculum, Pt. 4: Social Skills

Our journey through the Expanded Core Curriculum continues with a discussion of Social Interaction Skills, the ability to effectively relate to others socially.

Learning social skills depends so heavily on the use of vision, so we must actually teach (and model!) good social skills with youngsters who have visual challenges. Using good manners, being kind to one another and helping each other are skills that are routinely stressed each day in the VIPS preschool classrooms. Classroom materials that help children learn how to categorize emotional responses they are experiencing are part of the classroom routine, with the payback being that the children are “programmed” to respond in acceptable and appropriate ways. And with very active three-to-five year old’s, there are plenty of opportunities to practice our learning!

That parents are children’s first and best teachers is a belief long held by VIPS staff members and nowhere is that more true than when it comes to social skills. Whether adults are aware of it or not, children learn how to do things by following their example. If you talk with disrespect about others (and how many times a day do we say, “I cannot believe what that other driver just did!” and then proceed to elaborate on how you were wronged), your child will learn that it is okay to follow your example.

How often do we slam the phone down when yet another telemarketer calls during dinner? We might have just taught a child that saying rude things or abruptly hanging up on a caller is the appropriate response! We are all human so these things sometimes seem unavoidable. But if we can capitalize on this learning situation to say, “Mommy should have said, ‘I’m sorry but I’m not interested’ instead of hanging up on that person who just called,” you have taught your child that adults do make mistakes and given her a more appropriate way to handle similar situations.

Identifying the emotions your child is feeling is an important first step to helping her learn how to handle those emotions. Discussing how characters in favorite books or movies must have felt during memorable moments can help her learn how to understand what emotions are and perhaps, be better prepared to deal with them. Observing interactions between children can give you an excellent real-life example to teach your child. “I know

it upset you when Blaine took away your toy, but maybe you can share it with him for a few minutes and then he can give it back to you.” You’ve acknowledged the upset and set the scene for both children to behave in appropriate ways.

Role-playing is another excellent way to help children learn how to respond to social situations. Setting up a “fake” situation, especially something you have observed happening as your child interacts with others, can become a remarkable learning tool. Suggest alternative responses and discuss the positive and negative results of each. This can help your child form ideas about right and wrong.

Turn taking is a basic learning experience for all preschoolers. During a recent day in the VIPS Summer Enrichment Program, Ms. Paige had each child step, one at a time, to the outside doorbell to ring it. Another child waited inside to greet the “newcomer” with “Good morning.” The rest of the group watched as each child got to perform both tasks, observing and then modeling appropriate behavior. Each child got a turn to be ringer and greeter, waiting quietly, perhaps due to the novelty of the task, but also experiencing taking turns while learning appropriate doorbell answering behavior at the same time.

All of these are ways that your child can be helped to learn how to behave in socially appropriate ways, an important component of the Expanded Core Curriculum.



Learning how to be a good friend is so important. Ahmed engages in puppet play, which can be a way to model social interactions.

VIPS-Central KY Family Fun

by Jill Haas, Family Services Coordinator, VIPS Central Kentucky

On June 17th, VIPS families participated in the Kids' Jamboree at the Explorium and the Lexington Children's Theater. This event is put on in celebration of the Children's Charity Fund of the Bluegrass and is held each year offering families a fun night at these two Lexington family fun spots. VIPS had 8 families in attendance and shared the activities with dozens of children from other organizations.

The night began with exploring the two floors of Explorium exhibits (big hits for our kids were the Bubble Room and playing with the Marble Round-About). We gathered for pizza and cake and then headed next door to participate in a play with the Lexington Children's Theater.

The children were divided into groups then quickly made masks resembling caterpillars, frogs, jackals and elephants. They learned their lines and got on stage to perform. It was a fun-filled night and we really enjoyed making this a June tradition!



Left: Sophie entertains her Mom Jill. Below: Betty Jean, Arabella, and Keeley anxiously await their turn to perform in the play.



Classroom News

VIPS-Louisville

Play and Learn (PAL)

PAL was full of fun this summer. We made special boxes full of kisses for our fathers on Father's day. We also made lanterns for our camping out theme; the children loved carrying these around like they were real! They also had a great time spying through the monoculars!

As weather permitted, we enjoyed the playground, which usually worked in our favor. The Sensory Room and Kids Town continue to be places both the parents and children love to go.

We have some families who attend PAL regularly, but would love for other VIPS families to join us at any time. Parents are both great resources and super supports for each other. Come join us at PAL Fridays, 9:30 a.m., and see for yourself!!

Exploring Summer with the Two Day Twos

by Staci Maynard, PAL and Kids Town Preschool Teacher

It was great fun spending time with the Two Day Twos class again in between my personal summer classes. There were several new students who joined since I changed age groups, but these kids were as amazing as ever. We used common summer activities, such as going on picnics, camping, and going to the beach in order to work on concept development and other skills. All of the students also learned about appropriate social skills, following directions, adjusting to a schedule, and other important school and life skills as they prepared for next school year and the years to come.

Our class focused a lot on our fine and gross motor development. To promote fine motor development, the children performed tasks such as sticking pinwheels in flower foam, picking up plastic ants



The Twos group talks about a smartboard activity

to place them on picnic food, and painting with different tools (basters, Koosh balls, marshmallows, sticks, etc.). To develop gross motor skills, we had a parade, flew a kite, and practiced rolling various kinds of balls.

As usual, we like to promote the use of multiple senses and tactile discrimination. When a teacher brought a watermelon in for picnic week, we didn't just eat it. We first felt the watermelon as a whole, talking about its size, shape, color, texture, and weight. Then, a teacher cut it open, so the students could understand how different the color and texture was on the inside. The students experienced the watermelon using four of their five senses, though admittedly, taste was their favorite! If one is deliberate in thinking through all of the aspects that make up a concept, there is a rich experience that can be had with items that may seem commonplace on the surface.

We also made watermelon squishy sensory bags, which is a fun and easy sensory activity that you can do at home. We used quart-size plastic bags, squirted clear hair gel (hand sanitizer could be used instead) inside until it was about one-quarter to one-third full, added a few drops of red food coloring and some watermelon seeds or foam cut in the shape of seeds. We tried to release the air inside as we sealed the bag and taped the top with green duct tape (any color can be used but this color resembled a rind). Children can do or help with most of this process but may need assistance sealing and taping the bag. The most enjoyable part is patting and squishing the bag to get the food coloring mixed into the hair gel. Other types of sensory bags can be made too, such as using blue hair gel, plastic fish, and shells for an ocean squishy bag. For children who are working on letters, they can use this bag for letter tracing as well.

These summer topics lend themselves well to the practice of using magnification devices. When going to the park or camping or when pretending to do so, children can use binoculars or monoculars to locate particular objects or animals, such as a bird or squirrel. For closer viewing,



Above: Pyper loves the sensory room strand lights. Below: Brooklyn uses her cane as she walks down the hall.



they can learn to use magnifying glasses or CCTVs to observe the details of ocean life like seashells, starfish, or sand dollars.

The Twos class does a great deal of incidental learning -- discovering while we play and interact with one another informally. When observing this class, you receive a significant reminder that learning is, or at least should be, occurring constantly. These children are going to have an incredible time exploring the world further as they join their respective preschools next year.

Take a Look at This! Summer Enrichment

by Paige Maynard, Kids Town Preschool Teacher, TVI & DI

VIPS summer enrichment, "Take a Look at This!" hit the ground running with our largest enrollment to date -- 22 children attending all or some weeks of the summer! Each day, students were encouraged to use classic children's literature to "Take a Look at" all of the skills they can gain through reading, such as letter/sound relationships, recognizing pictures, working from left to



Christian and Max look for ants in the sugar.

right, thinking critically, creating tables and graphs, reflecting upon experiences, expressing creatively, interacting with others, listening attentively, and many others.

The book *That Terrible Awful Day* by Suzette Wright helped the students develop skills in connecting real objects to visual and tactile pictures. Since this book is about popsicles, they made their own popsicles, which they enjoyed with delight!

In the *Tall, Tall Grass* by Denise Fleming encouraged the students to develop listening skills as we listened for rhyming words throughout the story. This book encouraged us to use all our senses to observe the tall, tall grass in the sensory garden at VIPS. This book also encouraged the students to observe the outdoors at home; we even had a special insect visitor join us from a student's home.

We used the book *Polar Bear Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* by Bill Martin Jr. to teach the students to "kid read" a story book (using the pictures to tell



Vance scribbles on the braille writer.

the story in their own words). We made up our own polar bear song, which helped the children to read the story as part of a group and to themselves.

Our students even opened their own zoo in the dramatic play center, which helped them to develop career skills as they practiced taking care of lions and zebras.

The students developed skills in visual and tactile scanning as they searched for the leaf man in the book, *The Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert. Our children developed better body awareness as we sang about the makeup of his body. We also explored leaves of many textures in the sensory garden.

We celebrated Independence Day by hosting our very own Fourth of July parade. Each child rode his/her own festively decorated "parade float" (tricycle, wheelchair, or wagon) and waved as the crowd of administrative staff cheered. The parade was so much fun, the children gave an encore!



Below Left: Levi (top) loves riding his adapted trike; Taveon (below) enjoys working on the iPad. Below Right: Addy practices her walking gait with Mr. Maury.



Left: Bronson works on independent feeding with Ms. Staci. Right: Jaiden enjoys painting.



Friday Friends

The following is a tentative schedule for Friday Friends for 2014-15 school year:

November 21, 2014	March 6, 2015
December 5, 2014	April 3, 2015
January 9, 2015	May 8, 2015
February 6, 2015	

It will run 10:30 a.m. - noon. A parent or caregiver needs to stay with the child, enjoying fun learning activities together. There is a suggested \$5 donation.

VIPS-Indiana

At Home with Ms. Annie

Left: Annie uses the time Lilly needs to be seated for a tube feeding to engage her with simple apps on the iPad. Lilly likes the apps with bright lights, colors, and fun sounds. Below left: After using several metal bowls of different sizes for container play, Alayna found her favorite use for one of the bowls! Below right: After playing with bubbles, McKenna sits in the shade to explore big and little blocks and other materials during a summertime home visit.



VIPS-Central Kentucky

Summer Enrichment

by Dixie Miller, TVI & DI

On Wednesday, July 23 the Central Kentucky SummerPreschoolclas took a field trip to downtown Lexington. First stop was to spend some time at the Arts Place building with some ballerinas from The Lexington Ballet. The children got to learn a dance to the song, "Let It Go" and explore ballet shoes and costumes. We want to say a big thank you to the Lexington Ballet for opening up their center to us; we had a wonderful time.



Above: Children look at costumes; Below: Ballet Teachers pose with the children.

Then onto The Living Arts and Science Center exploring their sound room. The children spent time exploring all types of sounds from musical instruments, to sound waves, and animal sounds.



The Lexington office will be starting up our Two Day Twos program again once we are moved into our new space at the UK Lab School (late winter or early spring 2015). The Two Day Twos program is for any child who is two or older to help prepare them for the upcoming world of preschool. The class will meet two days a week.

Feel free to contact the office if you have questions or would like to reserve a spot for your child, 1-888-254-8477. Reserve your spot early as we anticipate this program will be in high demand!

Right: Ms. Dixie and Ashlyn at the Living Arts & Science Center



New Arrivals

VIPS is pleased to welcome the following new children and their families into the VIPS Program:

VIPS-Louisville

- Alex - 34 months, Louisville, KY
- Alexander - 16 months, Louisville, KY
- Annabell - 30 months, Louisville, KY
- Anthony - 22 months, Louisville, KY
- Ashella - 33 months, Louisville, KY
- Cameron - 39 months, Louisville, KY
- Jordan - 37 months, Louisville, KY
- Kayson - 8 months, Scipio, IN
- Lee - 10 months, Louisville, KY
- Levi - 7 months, Pewee Valley, KY
- Lila - 20 months, Louisville, KY
- Mack - 10 months, Louisville, KY
- Silas - 8 months, Corydon, IN
- Vivian - 26 months, Louisville, KY

VIPS-Central Kentucky

- Brayden - 11 months, Booneville, KY
- Cadance - 15 months, Harrodsburg, KY
- Dominic - 6 months, Frankfort, KY
- Felipe - 18 months, Lexington, KY
- Johnathan - 8 months, Williamsburg, KY
- Keiran - 20 months, Richmond, KY
- Kinley - 23 months, Highland Heights, KY
- Landon - 35 months, Louisa, KY
- Liliana - 12 months, Georgetown, KY
- Lily - 14 months, Berea, KY
- Lincoln - 14 months, Beattyville, KY
- Payton - 14 months, Virgie, KY
- Samantha - 16 months, Richmond, KY
- Summer - 14 months, Allen, KY
- Titus - 6 months, Mt. Olivet, KY
- Zachary - 27 months, Ashland, KY

VIPS-Indiana

- Arabella - 11 months, Marion, IN
- Ava - 11 months, Marion, IN
- Emma - 36 months, Indianapolis, IN
- Gage - 17 months, Terre Haute, IN
- Kaylee - 8 months, Columbus, IN
- Maria - 30 months, Bloomington, IN

Notes of Interest



The American Printing House for the Blind offers interesting monthly workshops and presentations that are of interest to VIPS families and the public in general. Here are some of their upcoming offerings:

- HALLOWEEN MASKS: October 25, 2014, 10:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. Open to all ages.
- DOG GUIDES: November 15, 2014, 10:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. Best for adults and children ages 8 and up.
- FAMILY DAY OPEN HOUSE: November 29, 2014, 10 a.m. -3 p.m.
- HOLIDAY ORNAMENT FACTORY: December 6, 2014, 10:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m.

For additional information, call 502-896-2405 or go online to www.aph.org/museum.

There is a new feeding support group being held at the Kids Center for Pediatric Therapies, 982 Eastern Parkway, Louisville, 40217. It meets on one Tuesday each month at 6:30 p.m. and features topics of interest to parents of children with feeding disorders, physicians, nutritionists, feeding therapists and anyone involved in helping children learn to eat. There are speakers along with parent-to-parent support; the group is moderated by speech therapists and registered dietitians. Contact Sally Sanders at 502-417-5127 or ssanders@kidscenterky.org for more information.

Ashley Emmons, VIPS Kids Town Preschool teacher, found an interesting blog entitled Fun at Home with Kids. It is well written and illustrated with photos by the mother of two young children who has a Master's degree in education. She shares how to make two versions of sensory boards, the first an Outdoor Music Sensory Sound Wall and secondly, a Kid-Made Nature Sensory Board for Babies. Her information is simple, very functional and applies to many different types of babies and toddlers!

To watch a video of the VIPS Kids Town Preschoolers taking their first TARC bus ride, go to <http://youtube/5OsfbZzEo4>. Because most of our students will need to use public transportation to access whatever they choose to do as adults, these children began the learning process early by experiencing

how to board, put money in the fare box, seat themselves and pull the cord to signal their stop. This was all part of our efforts to teach real life skills through early intervention. The children then rode the bus through the neighborhood to continue the experience via sounds and stops.

Thanks to the help of some great volunteers (who are family members of VIPS staff, including teens Ryan Hack and Alyssa Shippey, and Aggie Nelson, mother of our Executive Director), the children's book section of the VIPS Parent Library is now fully organized and labeled! Pauletta Feldman led the volunteers in this daunting task. Please feel free to drop in and check out materials for you and/or your VIPS child!

VIPS Staff News

New Staff

Terry DeLuca

We are thrilled to report that Terry DeLuca is the new Director of Community Relations and Development for VIPS-Central Kentucky. She is originally from Maysville, Kentucky but moved to Lexington in 1981. She is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University where she obtained her B.S. and M.A. degree in Education, emphasis in Allied Health. Terry was inducted into the ECU Hall of Fame for Distinguished Alumni in 1997 for her work and contribution not only to the university but to her community as well. In 1995 she was named Bluegrass Junior Woman's Club "Woman of the Year" for her service time and leadership role in Central Kentucky. In 1998 Terry received the Lexington Forum, "Spirit Award" for her volunteerism and commitment to the Lexington community.

Terry was honored to be on the selection committee for the new President of Lexington Catholic High School (LCHS) where she served 3 years on the board of trustees; 5 years on the LCHS Communications Committee as well as the Life Teen committee and is now serving on the Marketing and Communications Committee. She is a three time past President of the Lexington Dream Factory organization where she served on the board for 16 years. She also served on the Bluegrass Tomorrow Board, was an original member of the 211 United Way Committee and was previously National City



Bank (now PNC) chairperson for Lex Arts campaign. She is active in Pax Christi Catholic Church and is a past Chair of Commerce Lexington Leadership Steering Committee in which she served for 18 years. Terry is current treasurer of the Leadership Lexington Alumni Board as well as President-elect of this board for 2016.

Terry and husband Tom DeLuca have two sons. Michael, a graduate of Lexington Catholic High School, with an MBA from University of Dayton is now a Tax Manager in Ft. Myers, FL where he and wife Edee reside. Their youngest son, Daniel, is a senior at Eastern Kentucky University majoring in Sports Management and is on the EKU Colonel's Golf Team. Terry enjoys networking, golf, and reading "People" magazine in her spare time. We are pleased to welcome Terry to VIPS!

Kathy Moulden

Kathy Moulden recently joined Kids Town Preschool where she is working as an Instructional Assistant in a classroom with teacher Staci Maynard. Kathy worked as an Exceptional Child Education (ECE) Resource teacher in the Jefferson County Public School system until her retirement in September 2013. She retired but she did not slow down. She immediately began working part time as a classroom assistant in a preschool program at Down Syndrome of Louisville. She also worked, when needed, at a Mother's Day Out program at Hunsinger Lane Baptist Church. Kathy is married and has 4 adult children who still keep her very busy. She enjoys spending time with family, traveling, and learning new things. She is looking forward to a great year here at VIPS!



Preschool Rearrangements

The new school year brings with it new beginnings along with changes in students and staffing. The following are the changes in our Kids Town Preschool. We have a new Two Day Twos teacher, Marchelle Hampton (who we will introduce in the next issue of the newsletter). Shelby Birchler is now the Twos instructional assistant, in addition to providing late afternoon childcare.

We are pleased to announce that Beth Krebs, formerly Instructional Assistant in the Two Day Twos classroom, has put her superb organizational skills to use by agreeing to take on the role of Assistant Preschool Director. Beth is also serving as instructional assistant in Paige Maynard's Preschool classroom on. Way to go, Beth, a true multi-talented teacher!

In addition to Beth Krebs, Paige Maynard will be assisted by the Instructional Assistant provided by the Jefferson County Public Schools, Gretchen Cutrer. Ashley Emmons will be assisted in her preschool classroom by Beth Owens and Ashley Buren. Staci Maynard remains at the helm of the third preschool classroom, assisted by LaRhonda Locke-Daniels and our new instructional assistant, Kathy Moulden.

VIPS Board News

It is with sadness that we express our sympathies to Louisville Board Vice-President, John Talbott, in the recent loss of his grandmother. We appreciate so much his family's designation of VIPS to receive expressions of sympathy.

The VIPS Annual Meeting, held June 17, is a time for new beginnings, new board members and new officers, as well as to thank those individuals leaving the board. Gratitude was expressed to Robin Frazier, Dr. Steven Howell and Nora Meldrum, all of whom rotated off the board. Incoming board members included Al Cornish, Dr. John Franklin and Kelli Rodman. Welcome and thank you for helping us achieve our mission!

Beacon Awards Presented

The Beacon Awards recognize individuals and organizations that have helped further our mission by donating time, treasure or talent. This year's recipients were honored June 17 at the 2014 VIPS Annual Meeting. Prior to the official Beacon Awards presentation, a service award was given to Rebecca Davis to thank her for her selfless dedication to all of the families of young children who are visually impaired in Indiana. Rebecca, founder of VIPS-Indiana, has moved to Florida where her husband has relocated for a new job.



Rebecca was presented her award by Sharon Bensinger, VIPS Founder and first Executive Director.

The 2014 Beacon Award Winners

- Individual Volunteer - Haley Schnell
- Individual Benefactor - Sharon and Charlie Bensinger
- Corporate Volunteer - GE Appliance Park
- Corporate Benefactor - Louisville Boat Club
- Social Service Award - Family Tree Foundation
- Parent Ambassador - The Clarkson Family: "Team Addy"
- VIPS-Central Kentucky Beacon Award - Children's Charity Fund of the Bluegrass
- VIPS-Indiana Beacon Award - Indiana Kiwanis District Governor, Vanessa McClary
- VIPS-Indiana Benefactor Beacon Award - The Glick Fund
- VIPS-Indiana Beacon Award Champion for Children - Indiana State Senator, Mark Stoops
- VIPS Ambassador - The Community Foundation of Louisville

Congratulations to all Beacon Award winners. You truly are beacons of light and support for VIPS!



Vanessa McClary, Indiana Kiwanis District Governor, accepted the VIPS Indiana Beacon Award. Senator Mark Stoops, of the Indiana State Legislature, received the VIPS Indiana Champion for Children Award.

Below: Team Addy, the family of Addy Clarkson, took home the Parent Ambassador Award.



Left: VIPS President Jay Hatcher (far left) with Mark Fraley and Rod McNerney, President, of the Louisville Boat Club, winning the Corporate Benefactor Award.



Left: Haley Schnell received the Award for Individual Volunteer. Above: Angie Evans, Vice President for Community Leadership of the Community Foundation of Louisville, accepted the Ambassador Award.



The Family Tree Foundation received the Social Service Award.

In Memoriam

This issue of VISability is dedicated to the memories of:

Benjamin Kidd

son of Carolyn & Robert Kidd of Louisville,
who passed away on June 30, 2014 at the age of 29

Malyah Hall

daughter of Reanna Hall of Louisville,
who passed away July 28, 2014 at the age of 13

Sophia Crawford

daughter of Jacob and Jamie Crawford of Lexington,
who passed away on September 17, 2014 at the age three

Our hearts go out to all of those whose lives
were touched by Sophia, Ben and Malyah.

Kind Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure

VIPS-Louisville

We are most appreciative of the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) students from Brown Mackie College who collaborated with residents of Dismas House, a re-entry training program for offenders, to create and donate several large sensory boards filled with wonderful everyday items for the children to explore. Special thanks to Teresa Steinbach, wife of VIPS board member Andy Steinbach, who coordinates the OTA program.



For their assistance with the tennis tournament, we very much appreciate the efforts of these VIPS staffers and their families: Ashley Buren, Ashley Emmons, Jon Daniels, LaRhonda Daniels, Michael Daniels, Beth Krebs, Jack Krebs, Kathy Mullen and Beth Owen. Also volunteering was Joanna Foresman. Thanks to all for your invaluable help!

Volunteers from the Sullivan Exceptional Child Education department headed by Vicky Bowman, got together to collect a bunch of school supplies and cleaning supplies for VIPS and even made NEW STORY BOXES!

As always, we greatly value the time and expertise of our ever faithful Fran Woodward for volunteering in the 2s classroom every week!

A big thank you to Denise Dillard and her crew from Brown Forman for filling our cabinets with 20+ welcome bags! The bags are given to new families just referred to VIPS. Volunteers from Brown Forman have been doing this for VIPS for more than 15 years!

We have enjoyed and appreciate the help we've received from these young helpers who are learning about volunteerism at an early age: Ryan Hack from St. Stephens; Will Mullen and Graham Overstreet, both from St. Raphael; and Ben Toebe from Newburg Middle.

Many thanks are due to the folks who helped with Friday Friends: Gabrielle Clark, Katie Clark, Amanda Coomer from Indiana University Southeast, Jon Daniels from Bowen Elementary, Michael Daniels from Barrett Middle School along with Emme Metry from Assumption High.

We also thank Haley Schnell for her help in the preschool. She has provided so much help in fact, that she received a Beacon Award for her volunteerism!

VIPS-Indiana

VIPS Indiana received almost 400 shaker bottles that were generously made and donated by Indiana residents Cindy, Phil & Amber Lundgren and Dan Brodnik. The shaker bottles are being used in Welcome Bags for new children and for home visits as well as Play and Learn Groups. And because we received so many shaker bottles, we were able to give our VIPS Louisville office some as well. Thank you, Cindy, for organizing this wonderful donation.



Cindy Lundgren (left) with Annie, Tana and shaker bottles.

Mel Jolliff, executive director of the Indiana Interchurch Center, donated our new VIPS door decal at the Indiana office and undertook the tedious job of putting it up. Thanks, Mel, for your time and hard work.

VIPS-Indiana owes a number of people high praise for their assistance and support as VIPS staff recently testified before the Indiana state house. One such supporter is Kiwanis District Governor Vanessa McClary; thanks so very much for backing up our testimony! Vanessa received a VIPS Indiana Beacon Award for her endeavors.

Breakfast of Champions

On Thursday, June 19, VIPS-Indiana held our Breakfast of Champions at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Bloomington. The breakfast was an opportunity for VIPS to say thank you to several individuals and service organizations that have been strong supporters since the VIPS office opened in Bloomington. There were Lions and Kiwanis in attendance - both organizations have been generous in their support. Several Advisory Board members attended and also donated breakfast items for the event. In addition to thanking our supporters we also shared an update on VIPS-Indiana happenings - including information on the legislation that passed and our new VIPS office in Indianapolis.

Leaving a Legacy of Helping

by Sharon Bensinger, former Executive Director of VIPS

Have you ever thought you might want to leave a gift in your will to VIPS or another charity of your choice?

A few years ago my husband Charlie and I sat down with our lawyer to update our wills. It had been a long time since we had made any changes. Our lawyer has a great "bedside manner" and obviously has helped many people over his professional career to write their wills. He asked us many good questions, one of which was "what charitable organizations mean the most to you, and would you like to remember any in your will?" My answer was obviously "yes!"

Over my professional career, I had been to quite a few workshops that focused on getting folks to leave bequests to

nonprofit organizations. I especially remember seeing a short video quite a few years ago, stressing the fact that you do not have to be wealthy to leave money to a charitable organization!



Sharon and Charlie on a recent vacation.

Any amount of money.....\$500, \$5,000 or \$50,000 tells the charity that you believed in them in your lifetime, and now that you have passed, you want to support them with a gift. The important thing to remember is that you leave something, not the amount. I believe that to be true!

So, naturally I decided that I wanted to leave something to VIPS in my will. I was not sure how much to leave. I talked to my financial advisor and he told me about the idea of having VIPS purchase a life insurance policy that will pay out at my death. He went on to say that if I donated money for the purchase of a life insurance policy now, when I pass away VIPS will receive four times the amount! I never dreamed that I would be able to leave VIPS that much, so investing the money now and having it pay out at my death sounded like a great plan and made me very excited. That is exactly what I did.

I understand that may not be what you want to do. You may not have the cash now to give. You might want to leave money after your death. There are numerous ways to leave a legacy, including plans that pay you an actual income while you are alive and then benefit a selected nonprofit upon your passing.

To find the plan that works for you, just contact your lawyer or financial advisor. Additionally, VIPS has a team of experts who can also guide you through this process.

Please think about where you would like to leave money and, remember, how much is not important! The fact that you are remembering your favorite causes and want to leave something is what is important. Talk to an attorney, financial planner or the development staff at VIPS (Louisville: 888-636-8477, Lexington: 888-254-8477, and Indiana: 888-824-2197) to get started. Most importantly...Remember VIPS in your will!

Recent Grants and Donations

VIPS-Louisville

Kosair Charities donated \$125,000 to the KidsTown Preschool at VIPS Program, part of its very generous commitment to our children. We greatly value this wonderful relationship!

We are excited to announce that the WHAS Crusade for Children provided \$119,000 to help with partial teachers' salaries for all 3 VIPS offices! This is a 15.5% increase over 2013 totals. Thank you for your generosity!

Thanks ever so much to The Kentucky School for the Blind Charitable Foundation for the \$55,500 grant to help provide direct services to children across Kentucky and to help support the Dr. Mark Lynn Stampede for VIPS along with the VIPS Family Retreat.

We also appreciate the Cralle Foundation that donated \$10,000 to use for Kids Town Preschool scholarships.

Louisville Metro Government ensured the continuation of our Music Therapy Program by providing \$6,500. Thank you so much!

Thanks to the Jacob C. Koch Charitable Trust who helped provide braille writers for the children by donating \$3,921.

Thank you to volunteers from BB&T Insurance for selecting VIPS as its Lighthouse Project recipient this year. On May 27th, employees held a cookout at VIPS and raised over \$1,200 - 100% of which was donated to the agency! And you can't have a cookout without a grill, so the folks at BB&T purchased a brand new Weber Cast Iron grill for VIPS! This grill will be used many times in the future for family events and other fundraisers. Last but certainly not least, BB&T Insurance topped things off by purchasing a new curriculum for the KidsTown Preschool at VIPS program, which was a \$500 value. Thanks, BB&T Insurance!



Our little ones are enjoying the use of eight infant activity mats that were donated to VIPS by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). They (and we) appreciate it and consider ourselves very fortunate to be so close, physically and professionally, to such a giant in the field of blindness.

We thank the John Talbott family for their gift of mega-blocks.

We are ever so grateful to Rita DeVore, mother of VIPS-Indiana staff member, Meredith Howell, for her invaluable assistance in setting up the auction item, Costa Rica Experience, for our recent Tennis Ball. Rita owns a B & B in Costa Rica and helped Meredith obtain donations from her business, the Casa Bella Rita Bed & Breakfast along with The Villa Hermosa, Cabañas Valle Campanas, The Toucan Rescue Ranch and Vamos Rent-A-Car. Special thanks to Rita and to these organizations and companies who helped us raise the \$5,000 this auction item brought!

VIPS-Central Kentucky

Thanks to the United Way of the Bluegrass for donating \$29,650 to help provide early intervention and summer preschool programs.

Also, thanks are due to the Lexington Junior League which donated \$1,000 to provide welcome bags along with the volunteers to put them together.

VIPS-Indiana

Thanks so much to the Bloomington Lions Club for donating \$1,000 for services for children.

We'd like to express our gratitude to the Clay City VFW-Men's Auxiliary and Women's Auxiliary; Logger's Inc. and the Washington Township Lions Club for their donations to our 5K race. We also appreciate the donations of Attorney Mark Hassler of Terre Haute, Bill and Peggy Booe and Bill and Elaine Travis. Your generous donations, along with countless others, helped make our inaugural Walking for Dreams 5K our largest fundraiser to date!

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Rachael Alaniz, the VIPS mom who held a Scentsy Buddy party to fund the purchase of one of these scented stuffed animal toys for each VIPS Indiana child, delivered boxes of them to the office for distribution. Thanks again, Rachael, for your thoughtful gifts!



Little Kayla enjoys her Scentsy Buddy.

Fund Raising Frenzy

The last two weeks of May were filled with fundraising events which provide so much support for VIPS programs.

11th Annual VIPS-Central Kentucky Golf Outing

On May 20, VIPS-Central Kentucky hosted its 11th Annual Golf Outing at Keene Run Golf Club. Over twenty teams played this year. A silent auction and golf ball prizes were part of the fun.

26th Annual YUM! Brands Corporate Challenge

The YUM! Brands Corporate Challenge was a huge success, raising nearly \$62,000. With over 100 golfers and beautiful weather, we couldn't have asked for a better day! The event was held May 19, 2014 at the wonderful Persimmon Ridge Golf Course. We so appreciate YUM! Brands for being our sponsor for this event for the 26th straight year. And we appreciate Andy Steinbach and Debbie Baldwin who again coordinated the event for YUM! Brands.

Overall Winners with best score were Dr. Mark Lynn & Associates (This was this team's second golf tournament of the day!)

Thank you to all who participated and to Persimmon Ridge Golf Club, Ron Snider, Celia Callarman, Lauren Just and all the Persimmon staff, for helping make the day even more perfect. Thanks to all the volunteers and sponsors of the event.

VIPS Tennis Ball & Tournament

The Tennis Ball was May 31 at the beautiful Louisville Boat Club. We had over 165 guests join us for this wonderful evening which started with cocktails while a photo booth on the patio entertained guests. The silent auction was filled with wonderful items including signed art pieces by Julius Friedman and pieces of Irma's Treasures (Irma Bensinger, Sharon Bensinger's late mother-in-law)!

After dinner was underway, our auctioneer for the night, Steve Cherry, helped VIPS with our live auction which included a trip to Costa Rica! Brittney, Nathan and Addyson Clarkson spoke to the crowd and didn't leave a dry eye in the place after Addison sang.

Thank you to all the supporters at the Tennis Ball who raised their bidder numbers high for the children. The grand total raised by the Tennis Ball and Tournament and raffle was just over \$93,000!

The Tennis Tournament was held the following day at the Louisville Boat Club, with a sold-out crowd of 40 doubles teams.

Tips for VIPS!!

On August 28th, VIPS-Central Kentucky participated in the Central Bank Thursday Night Live (CBTNL) event at Cheapside Park in Lexington. During the months of April through October, various genres of bands are scheduled to play each Thursday night. Local nonprofit agencies participating in CBTNLC are paired up with a band and volunteer with distributing beverages during the band's performance. Tips received throughout the evening are donated to the agency that volunteered that night.

Agencies are also allowed to set up displays providing information about their particular organization. CBTNLC has become so popular with the live music, vendors, and family-friendly atmosphere that this year the dates have been extended to include September and October.

Wish List

VIPS-Louisville

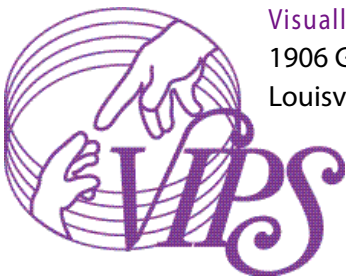
- Board books to use for Christmas gifts (small, simple, regular print word books printed on heavy cardboard pages) with titles such as "Elmo Says," "Humpty Dumpty," "That's Not My Tractor," or "Animal Noises"
- Tagboard, Paper and/or cardboard
- Binder rings (all sizes)
- Black, white, red, yellow, and blue cardstock
- Purple copy paper
- Batteries (AA, AAA & 9 Volt)
- Acrylic paint
- Free and Clear High Efficiency laundry detergent

VIPS-Indiana

- Printer paper
- Gift cards for gas
- Gift cards for groceries/office supplies
- Paper Cutter
- Shelving for Large Tubs (6 feet tall and 2 feet deep)
- Disinfectant wipes
- Round Meeting Table (60 inches)

VIPS-Central Kentucky

- Moving boxes
- Packaging tape
- Empty powdered baby formula cans
- Black, white, red, or yellow contact paper



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Upcoming Events

VIPS-Louisville

Fridays

PAL Class meets, 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, October 25

Trunk-N-Treat will be held in the parking lot of the VIPS Office, 10 - 11:30 a.m. We will have the parking lot blocked off for Trick-or-Treating. (We will moved inside if weather is bad).

Thursday, November 20

VIPS will hold a Thanksgiving Dinner for VIPS families, 6:30 - 8 p.m., at the VIPS Office. Bring a side dish to share and enjoy roasted turkey, provided by VIPS.

Sunday, December 14

VIPS will hold our Annual Santa Party at the VIPS Office, 3 - 5 p.m. There will be refreshments and treats from Santa for all the good little girls and boys. Hold the date or you may find coal in your stocking!

Please contact Martha Hack, at 502-498-2926 or mhack@vips.org, to let her know how many in your family plan to attend these events.

VIPS-Central Kentucky

Thursday, October 23

Premiere of 23 Blast at the Kentucky Theater.

Friday, October 24

VIPS Central KY will hold our annual Halloween party.

Saturday, December 13

The Annual Santa Party will be held at Gardenside Church. Watch for details.

For more information contact Jill Haas at (859) 685-6714 or jhaas@vips.org.

VIPS-Indiana

Friday, October 17

The Kiwanis Club of Bloomington will be hosting the Operation Chili for Children fundraiser at the National Guard Armory of Bloomington from 4:30 - 8p.m . Enjoy a chili supper all while helping support VIPS.

23 BLAST Premiere to Benefit VIPS-Lexington!

The movie 23 Blast tells the story of Travis Freeman, a Corbin, KY high school foot ball player who loses his vision and keeps on playing. Proceeds from the Oct. 23 Premiere at the Kentucky Teater, with actors and producers will benefit VIPS. Tickets for the viewing are \$25; for the viewing and afterparty, tickets start at \$200.



VISability is a bi-monthly publication of Visually Impaired Preschool Services, Jan Moseley, Editor.

VIPS-Louisville

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Martha Hack, Events Manager/Family Services Coord.
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